

WE CLAIM:

1. A fireplace assembly, comprising:
  - a combustion chamber enclosure defining a combustion chamber;
  - an outer enclosure having a front panel and defining an inner volume sized to receive the combustion chamber enclosure at a position spaced rearward of the front panel;
  - an access panel positioned between the combustion chamber enclosure and the front panel of the outer enclosure; and
  - fireplace controls disposed within the inner volume of the outer enclosure outside of the combustion chamber enclosure.
2. The fireplace assembly of claim 1, further comprising a combustion air enclosure positioned in the inner volume of the outer enclosure between the combustion chamber enclosure and the outer enclosure and configured to provide combustion air to the combustion chamber.
3. The fireplace assembly of claim 2, wherein combustion chamber enclosure includes at least top, bottom, rear, and first and second side panels, and the combustion air enclosure extends around substantially all of an outer surface of at least two panels of the combustion chamber enclosure.
4. The fireplace assembly of claim 2, wherein the combustion chamber enclosure includes top and bottom panels and a side panel extending between the top and bottom panels, and the combustion air enclosure extends around substantially all of the side panel of the combustion chamber enclosure.
5. The fireplace assembly of claim 2, wherein the fireplace controls are disposed within the inner volume of the outer enclosure outside of the combustion air enclosure.

6. The fireplace assembly of claim 1, wherein the fireplace controls include a gas valve assembly and a control unit assembly.

7. The fireplace assembly of claim 1, further comprising a glass panel positioned between the access panel and a front surface of the combustion chamber enclosure.

8. The fireplace assembly of claim 1, wherein the access panel includes first and second side panels aligned with side surfaces of the combustion chamber enclosure, and a bottom panel aligned with a bottom surface of the combustion chamber enclosure.

9. The fireplace assembly of claim 1, wherein the combustion chamber enclosure and the access panel include a matching brick pattern.

10. The fireplace assembly of claim 6, wherein the glass panel is retained to the combustion chamber enclosure with a spring biased member that permits movement of the glass panel away from the combustion chamber in response to high combustion forces within the combustion chamber.

11. The fireplace assembly of claim 1, wherein the fireplace controls are positioned between a side surface of the combustion chamber enclosure and the outer enclosure.

12. The fireplace assembly of claim 1, further comprising a light source configured to direct light into the combustion chamber.

13. The fireplace of claim 1, wherein the side panel includes first and second side portions and a rear portion, and the intersection of the side and rear portions includes a contoured surface to provide the appearance that the combustion chamber enclosure has substantially no back corners.

14. The fireplace of claim 13, wherein the contoured surface includes an overlapping structure that provides a ledge structure.

15. The fireplace of claim 1, wherein the combustion chamber enclosure is formed using compression or injection molding or vacuum forming.

16. The fireplace of claim 8, the side panel of the combustion chamber enclosure includes air passage apertures formed therein to promote airflow between the combustion air chamber and the combustion chamber.

17. A method of manufacturing a fireplace that includes an outer enclosure having a rear panel and a front panel that defines a front surface of the fireplace, a combustion chamber enclosure having top, bottom and side panels defining a combustion chamber and a front surface of the combustion chamber enclosure, a combustion air enclosure, a glass panel, and controls, the method comprising the steps of:

positioning the combustion chamber enclosure within the outer enclosure between the front and rear panels such that the front surface of the combustion chamber enclosure is spaced rearward from the front panel of the outer enclosure;

coupling the glass panel to the front surface of the combustion chamber enclosure;

positioning the controls between the outer enclosure and the combustion chamber enclosure; and

positioning the combustion air enclosure between the outer enclosure and the combustion chamber enclosure thereby forming a combustion air chamber.

18. The method of claim 17, further comprising forming an aperture in the combustion chamber enclosure between the combustion chamber and the air passage.

19. The method of claim 17, wherein the fireplace further includes a removable panel, and the method further comprises positioning the removable panel

between the front panel of the outer enclosure and the front surface of the combustion chamber enclosure.

20. The method of claim 19, wherein the removable panel covers substantially all exposed metal of the glass panel, combustion air enclosure, and combustion chamber enclosure.

21. The method of claim 19, further comprising forming a pattern in the side panel that substantially matches a pattern formed in the combustion chamber enclosure.

22. The method of claim 17, further comprising controlling generation of heat within the combustion chamber with the controls.

23. The method of claim 17, wherein the side panel of the combustion chamber enclosure extends along first and second side and rear portions of the combustion chamber enclosure, the method further comprising forming the side panel of the combustion chamber enclosure such that the intersection of the side and rear portions of the side panel are contoured to provide an appearance that the combustion chamber has substantially no back corners.

24. The method of claim 17, further comprising forming a portion of the combustion chamber enclosure from a molded material.

25. The method of claim 24, wherein the forming step includes compression molding, injection molding, or vacuum forming the continuous panel using a ceramic fiber and a binder or a moldable ceramic.

26. The method of claim 17, further comprising forming a brick design in the combustion chamber enclosure.

27. The method of claim 26, wherein the side panel includes an intersecting first side panel and a back panel, the method comprising forming a contoured surface in the brick design at an intersection of the first side and back panels.

28. The method of claim 17, wherein the step of positioning the combustion air enclosure includes surrounding substantially an entire outer surface of at least two combustion chamber enclosure panels with the combustion air enclosure.

29. A fireplace, comprising:

a combustion chamber enclosure including top and bottom panels and a side panel positioned between the top and bottom panels, the panels defining a combustion chamber and a front surface of the combustion chamber enclosure;

a combustion air enclosure extending around substantially an entire outer surface of the combustion chamber enclosure thereby defining a combustion air chamber between the combustion chamber enclosure and the combustion air enclosure;

whereby a hole formed through any panel of the combustion chamber enclosure provides an inlet for combustion air to enter the combustion chamber from the combustion air chamber.

30. The fireplace of claim 29, wherein the combustion air enclosure is configured to be secured and sealed to the combustion chamber enclosure at the front surface.

31. The fireplace of claim 29, wherein the combustion chamber enclosure includes a plurality of combustion air apertures formed in at least one of the bottom, rear, and side panels.

32. The fireplace of claim 29, further comprising a glass panel having a glass sheet and a frame extending around the glass sheet, and the glass panel is secured to the front surface of the combustion chamber.

33. The fireplace of claim 32, wherein the combustion air enclosure is positioned between the glass panel and the front surface of the combustion chamber enclosure, and the fireplace further comprises a gasket positioned between the glass panel frame and the combustion air enclosure.

34. The fireplace of claim 29, wherein the combustion chamber enclosure and the combustion air enclosure are secured together with an airtight seal.

35. The fireplace of claim 29, wherein the combustion chamber enclosure is molded as a single piece.

36. The fireplace of claim 29, wherein the rear and first and second side panels of the combustion air enclosure are formed as a single piece from a single piece of material.

37. The fireplace of claim 29, further comprising an aperture formed in any panel of the combustion chamber enclosure, wherein the aperture provides an air intake opening between the combustion chamber and the combustion air chamber.

38. A method of assembling a fireplace that includes a combustion chamber enclosure defining a combustion chamber, a combustion air enclosure, and a glass panel, the method including the steps of:

positioning the combustion chamber enclosure inside the combustion air enclosure; and

securing the glass panel to the combustion chamber enclosure with the combustion air enclosure positioned there between thereby sealing the fireplace with an airtight seal in a single step.

39. A fireplace, comprising:  
an outer enclosure having a front panel defining a front of the fireplace;

a combustion chamber enclosure defining a combustion chamber and including a front surface, the combustion chamber enclosure being positioned within the outer enclosure at a location spaced rearward from the front panel of the outer enclosure;

a glass panel including a glass frame and a glass sheet mounted in the glass frame and configured to be secured to the front surface of the combustion chamber enclosure; and

a surround member adapted and configured to be positioned between the front panel of the outer enclosure and the glass panel to cover the glass frame from view.

40. The fireplace of claim 39, wherein the surround includes first and second side panels that are independently adjustable and removable to gain access to a space between an interior of the outer enclosure and an outer surface of the combustion chamber enclosure.

41. The fireplace of claim 39, wherein the surround further includes a top panel and a bottom panel that each extend between the first and second side panels.

42. The fireplace of claim 39, wherein the fireplace further includes a control unit and a valve positioned between the outer enclosure and the combustion chamber enclosure.

43. The fireplace of claim 39, wherein the outer enclosure includes a bottom panel having a plurality of hole formed therein to provide airflow openings between an area beneath the outer enclosure and a portion of an interior space of the outer enclosure.